

Los Padres National Forest



Figueroa Mountain Wildflower Update – April 14, 2016

Hello everyone! Welcome to the mid April update. Beautiful California poppies are continuing to make quite an impression throughout Figueroa Mountain. While the carpeted areas are beginning to dwindle in certain spots, they are still magnificent and very much worth a trip. If you are planning a visit, it should be done soon as it is hard to predict how long the poppies will be showing off.

Starting at the first cattle guard, the wildflowers in this area are still lovely. Chinese houses are still in abundance along with hummingbird sage, fiesta flowers, Johnnie jump-ups and buttercups. As one makes the turn along the second bend, on the left, a handful of small pink owl's clovers are still present. As one approaches the rock formation on the right, look for vivid, Red Indian paintbrush as it makes its way through. As one continues under the tree canopy, look for miniature lupine, Chinese houses, buttercups, blue dicks, sky lupine and Johnny jump-ups.

As you get to the opened, rusty gate, look on the ground and to the right and tiny cream cups are continuing to bloom, along with some fillaree.

Look to your right and see Grass Mountain still looking lovely, just not as showy as it was in the last few weeks. The grasses are curing and the poppies are getting tired and beginning to dwindle.

Other wildflowers to look for as you continue your uphill climb, include buttercups, goldfields, coreopsis, California poppies, fillaree, royal lupine, Ceanothus, buckwheat and golden yarrow. On the serpentine formation on the right, beautiful pink prickly phlox continues to bloom. Lovely orange wall flowers are still plentiful just past the serpentine wall on the right. Look in the grassy meadows and find gorgeous Mariposa lilies in great numbers.

At Vista Point (large gravel turnout about 11.4 miles from the bottom), very few flowers are in bloom. Fillaree and goldfields are covering portions of the ground and the blue-eyed grass is in bloom. However, the chocolate lilies and the shooting stars have gone to seed in this area. Across Vista Point, look for poppies, golden yarrow, blue dicks, chia, globe gillias and coreopsis.

In the field to the right, before Tunnel Ranch Road, lovely wall flowers can be found, with fillaree and buttercups scattered beautifully among that field as well. Wild onion is starting to come out. Check out the beautiful bush lupine blooming right across this area. It is quite striking.

About a quarter mile further, the popular poppy hillside and slopes are still in bloom. This year they weren't quite as prolific as in past years, but still lovely. As with the poppies on Grass Mountain, these cuties are dwindling as well. While a few sky lupine managed to bloom on this hillside, they were few and far between. On the other hand, the bush lupine continue to be absolutely striking. Not only are they beautiful, but their heavenly scent is truly spectacular. Common and caterpillar Phacelia continues to bloom in this area, along with globe gillias.

Continuing on Figueroa Mountain Road, more and more sky lupine seem to be blooming. Between the campground and the Davy Brown trailhead, one can find bush lupine, golden yarrow, Ceanothus, and lovely, purple Chias on the hillsides to the left, along with sky lupine. About one quarter mile past the Davy Brown trailhead, at the large dirt turn out to the left, in the fields adjacent to this turn out, chocolate lilies are still prolific, but probably not for much longer. While some are still in bloom, others are rapidly fading. Beyond this area, carpets of goldfields, mixed with tidy tips are quite visible.

Indian paintbrush, coreopsis and buttercups are also showing off their beautiful colors. One can also find more stunning chocolate lilies, still in full bloom, along the pipe fence on the right.

At Ranger Peak, sweet baby blue eyes are still peeking through the grass. One can find them just beyond the gate and throughout the shaded areas on the right along Ranger Peak. Also look for miner's lettuce, fiddle neck and purple phacelias.

From Ranger Peak to Cachuma Saddle, bush lupine, bush poppies and sticky leaf monkey flower are busy decorating the rocky hills and sides of the road in bright yellow, golden and purple hues. Along this stretch, the yellow California poppies are still gorgeously carpeting the hillsides to your right. Golden yarrow, purple and caterpillar phacelias, sticky leaf monkey flowers, sky and royal lupine, fiddle neck, wall flowers, purple nightshade, Mexican elderberry and chia can be found along this stretch. There is also a lovely wall colored by beautiful, Red Indian paintbrush, as well as a couple of sightings of coulter lupine.

Sunset Valley is quite colorful. The hillsides continue to have carpets of yellow California poppies. One can find Ceanothus, golden yarrow, chia, poppies, milk thistle, coulter lupine, royal lupine, morning glories, popcorn flower, fillaree, Chinese houses, prickly phlox, common and caterpillar phacelias, blue dicks, globe gillias, Mexican elderberry, baby blue eyes, wild canyon peas, wild cucumber, vetch, clematis, prickly phlox, stunning Nuttall's larkspur and sticky leaf monkey flowers. Along disturbed hillsides, look for lovely yet deceitful spiny lupine, but don't touch or you will be feeling its cactus like needles in your skin for days.

Happy Canyon is also very lovely with its plethora of wildflowers. Poppies, vetch, golden yarrow, mustard, clematis, spiny lupine, royal lupine, spiny lupine, coulter lupine, milk thistle, wild canyon peas, wild cucumber, Ceanothus, Mexican elderberry, morning glories, bush lupine, blue headed gillias, bush poppies and blue dicks can all be spotted while heading out Happy Canyon. As one makes themselves to what used to be Cachuma Campground, look for beautiful, dark purple fiesta flowers on the right side of the road in the shaded areas, along with beautiful magenta colored vetch. As you go beyond the opened gate, look towards the right and discover the picturesque rock walls come alive with deep orange to red hues of beautiful Indian paintbrush. Look closely and you might even see a charming yellow paintbrush as well. Canyon peas, Mexican elderberry, prickly phlox, Ceanothus and popcorn flower can also be found in this area. As you make your final descent down Happy Canyon, delicate mariposa lilies are plentiful through the tall, wispy, green grassy meadows. Coreopsis, milk thistle, blue-eyed grass, cactus flower, purple sage, purple nightshade, Johnnie jump-ups, pearly everlasting, morning glories, fiesta flowers, Mexican elderberry, Ceanothus and a few shooting stars are all present for your viewing and photographing pleasure.

Many have been wondering if we will be rescheduling the wildflower tour that was cancelled due to rain. It is still uncertain whether or not we will. If we do, it will be sometime in May. We will certainly keep you posted.

That's all for this update. Look for our next wildflower update in two weeks. Until then, happy viewing! For more information, please contact Helen Tarbet at htarbet@fs.fed.us.



The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) prohibits discrimination in all its programs and activities on the basis of race, color, national origin, sex, religion, age, disability, political beliefs, sexual orientation, and marital or family status. (Not all prohibited bases apply to all programs.) Persons with disabilities who require alternative means for communication of program information (Braille, large print, audiotape, etc.) should contact USDA's TARGET Center at 202-720-2600 (voice and TDD).

To file a complaint of discrimination, write USDA, Director, Office of Civil Rights, Room 326-W, Whitten Building, 14th and Independence Avenue, SW, Washington, DC 20250-9410 or call 202-720-5964 (voice or TDD). USDA is an equal opportunity provider and employer.